1-1-1935

Rifle rule in Cuba

Carleton Beals

RIFLE RULE IN CUBA

CARLETON BEALS

AND

CLIFFORD ODETS

5c

DEDICATED

to the heroic Cuban Reception Committee which braved bullets and clubs to bring the greetings of the Cuban people struggling for independence to the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba.

Published by

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE FOR CUBA

77 Fifth Avenue New York, N. Y.

September, 1935

209

Cuba's Blood Book

By CARLETON BEALS

THE other night I dreamed that Mr. Vincent Astor of the Nourmahal, the yachting and business friend of President Roosevelt, had gone to arrange some matters concerning a possible new loan to the so-called Mendieta government of Cuba and to fix up a new steamship line with the boats the Roosevelt government gave him the money to build and which are so heavily subsidized by our government. He sailed over the calm sea along the Florida Keys and finally entered Havana harbor past Morro Castle.

But on his arrival, through some mistake that had been made, a swarm of marine police with machine guns surrounded him, not to escort him off the boat as is necessary to protect the life of Ambassador Jefferson Caffery when he arrives, but to put him under arrest. When he protested and said who he was, they merely shoved him about, and when he became angry, flung him across the ship's salon. He was then dragged across the bay and up the long rocky road to Tiscornia, Cuba's immigration station, and there made to eat swill and sleep on a bedbug infested iron cot.

The police apparently were really concerned. In his baggage they found very incriminating literature about high financial deals which were to steal even more of the island away from the Cubans; a very dangerous man indeed.

I dreamed that Ambassador Jefferson Caffery pretended not to know that Vincent Astor was under arrest, not wishing to worry his chum, Fulgencio Batista, who likes to think he is the strong man running Cuba. But as I went along the Malecon, I saw an armored car, the Embassy car, and a fleet of armed police, hurrying in the direction of Camp Columbia. They seemed to be in frantic haste.

I then dreamed that I, too, was out at Camp Columbia, and there Caffery was talking to Batista. He was jerking his

shoulders and ducking his head even more nervously than is habitual with him; he was actually biting his nails. Disguised as a papaya tree, I listened to Caffery tell Batista what a dreadful mistake had been made; that something had to be done about it immediately, or Uncle Sam, Delano, and all the people who have money invested in Cuba, would be very upset.

The whole consular force, the whole embassy force, I discovered in my strange dream, had cut short their social engagements and were losing sleep running hither and yon. The secretary and the vice-consul were out at Tiscornia, holding Vincent Astor's head. They ran off and got him a mattress and pillows and a doctor gave him an anti-typhoid injection and plenty of quinine, for the mosquitos were bad. They were just like ants running around in circles when the entrance to their nest is closed up.

It also seemed that in my dream, disguised as an electric lamp post, I read the *Diario de la Marina,* a special night edition, which said that a reception committee of bankers, the head of the tourist commission, a group of plantation owners, and others had come down to the pier to meet Mr. Astor. But there they had been slugged and dragged off to Principe Castle where they were brutally tortured. There were rumors that one was even given Ley de Fuga, *i. e.,* shot in the back under the pretext that he "was trying to escape", and that his body was left lying in the gutter of the Marianao residential section. Such a mistake seemed inconceivable, but such things had been done to many people who were not bankers. And if they got these dignified gentlemen by mistake, no one would be there to tell them to act differently.

All the way down to the immigration station, Batista was saying to Caffery in an anguished tone that he thought that Mr. Astor was traveling under a false name and that he really was just a member of the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba. As their armored cars dashed up to the iron-barred immigration station, the guards jumped to attention. And in half an hour, disguised as a bottle of cologne, I saw Vincent Astor safely tucked into bed with an ice-pack to calm his distraught nerves.

It was all too bad, and there was the devil to pay. It didn't make things look so good in Cuba. Caffery scampered up to

Washington to explain to the big chief. And there was a lot of work done trying to put a good face on the matter. Day and night Caffery gave out statistics and more statistics about the improved trade of Cuba. And so the matter was finally forgotten.

* * *

The story which follows by Odets, tells in simple but colorful manner, just what did happen to the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba. It went there, not to concern itself about investments or steamship lines or sugar or public utilities except in so far as they affected the welfare of the Cuban people and the relations of the island to the United States. It went there principally to find out about the condition of the Cuban people, who had suffered the long black years of the Machado tyranny and were now suffering the even more hopeless Caffery-Batista tyranny.

Many Americans, in a spirit of loyalty and idealism, had made sacrifices to give money to help send this committee to Cuba. Some of the members had spent money they could ill afford to make the trip. But the indignities suffered by the committee, the frustrations which it suffered, tell far more vividly of the actualities of the regime running that country than perhaps if they had been allowed to land in a civilized manner and had brought in their report. One taste of the jam tells you what all the rest is like.

Every effort is made by the Cuban government and Ambassador Caffery to keep the real truth of the Cuban situatiton from the American public. The arrest of the committee and its deportation was the most desperate effort in that direction thus far attempted.

But though the real news may not get into the large organs of public information, the truth has a way of trickling out. We can, even though the committee was not allowed to investigate, set the contemptible and cowardly manner in which fifteen American men and women were treated on their arrival in Cuba against the dark prison bars of a Cuba in chains, which all the petty trade statistics in the world cannot shut out from the vision of the world.

In Machado's day I stood by the operating table and saw

the life go out of that great student leader, Julio Antonio Mella, shot in the back by the hired assassins of the dictator. I saw the three noble Freyre de Andrade brothers lying in the pools of their own blood, shot down by armed henchmen. Today to the long list of martyrs must be added the name of Antonio Guiteras and many, many others, shot down by the assassins of Batista.

And yet Batista is not hated even as badly as is American Ambassador Caffery, without whose aid, Batista would be an ill-schooled nobody. It was Welles and Caffery who overthrew the Grau San Martin government, by a ring of American battleships, by intrigue and by propaganda. Today President Mendieta is merely Caffery's office-boy and Batista his top-sergeant. Both Batista and Caffery travel behind the same machine guns, the machine guns that were trained on a little group of honest American investigators to drive them out of the land. If Batista were not protected by Caffery he would not for one moment have dared take such unforgettable and unjustifiable action. We have had many examples of the use of the local colonial straw bosses and their lawless killers to accomplish the ends desired by large American business interests, but this is the first time those straw bosses were permitted to use their terror and their weapons against American citizens. It is a precedent that may have funereal consequences for everybody concerned. It is a two-edged weapon. The British have never been that stupid in handling colonial affairs.

* * *

President Roosevelt has just been presented with a book signed by the blood of 300,000 Cubans, the most shameful and false plebiscite taken since the French army, with the aid of traitorous Mexicans, collected signatures to bring Maximilian at the point of the bayonet to the throne of Mexico, and by this means of a false showing of popular support throw up a smoke-screen to conceal the real brutality and purposes of the debt-collecting expedition.

Only five months ago, in March, every student and teacher in all Cuba, most of the workers, and many members of the professional classes went on general strike against the tyranny of the Batista-Caffery government and the intolerable economic conditions in the island. The strike movement embraced over

500,000 persons and this did not include the workers on sugar plantations, which for two months had been under martial law with the death penalty for strikers.

Batista, with Caffery at his elbow, administered a terrible blood purge which must have aroused the envy of Nazi Germany. Army trucks plunged into every town, and the soldiery fired right and left to terrorize the inhabitants. Every night in the streets of Havana the army and marines shot at the stars for hours on end to terrorize the city. Men were dragged from their homes by soldiers and Batista's secret police, were shot down without trial, without mercy, and left dying in the public highway. Such things are still going on but the news is suppressed.

The blood book presented to Roosevelt with so many false signatures is a monstrous joke. It was delivered with fine speeches. It was received with a fine speech—unctuous words for the welfare of Cuba where every human right has been trampled under foot and the island is bowed beneath a tyranny more efficient, more narrow, more hopeless than that of Machado. Said Roosevelt: "This is a splendid demonstration and proves that something we have always desired has had success". But the book which Roosevelt has received is a book of crime and murder.

It is brought to Roosevelt by the high-sounding Social and Economic Union of Cuba. This organization is nothing more than a group organized by a little claque of plantation owners at the behest of Ambassador Jefferson Caffery, which serves as his vehicle of propaganda to prove by false evidence that everything is lovely on the island. With the delegation presenting the book came the presidents of another group of plantation owners and of an organization representing corporation heads and the local executives of American big business. Also came Rafael Maria Angulo, member of the Cuban Council of State and president of the Associated Press of Cuba, a government news agency whose function is to suppress the truth, even were the few remaining official papers disposed to print it; Arturo Manas, a member of the Institute of Sugar Stabilization, a government outfit financed by $42,000,000 worth of bonds handled by the Chase National Bank, and the policies of which are largely controlled by that institution; Alfredo Cebrerio, gen-

eral secretary of the Cuban Federation of Labor*, a fake labor organization of 2,000 non-workers, created by the dictator Machado and now subsidized by the Batista-Caffery tyranny; German Beci, ex-secretary of the Railway Brotherhood, another Batista-Caffery henchman who has betrayed his fellow workers. And finally a delegate of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce. Hail, hail, the gang's all here!

How were these signatures secured? Out on the sugar estates where wages have dropped back to 40 cents, even 25 cents a day for sun-up to sun-down labor, the sheets were passed around. Any man who refused to sign was in danger of losing his job, and if he lost his job under suspicious circumstances, he was in danger of being dragged out of his home by the soldiers, to be jailed, tortured or murdered. The same coercion was used to secure petitions in factories and mines.

Also, thousands of signature-collectors were offered a cent a name to go and rustle to fill up the sheets. The beautiful daughters of starving families were pressed into service. Who could not gather at least fifty signatures a day, and fifty signatures meant fifty cents, and a hundred signatures meant a silver dollar, more than could be earned toiling in the sun for twelve hours? A silver dollar, to families many of whom have been out of work for years, is manna from heaven. These signatures are a proof, not of the gratitude of the Cuban people to a mythical godfather up in Washington, but of the misery and starvation that stalks the island.

Many of the signatures were gotten under false pretences. People were told it was a petition to Roosevelt to get him to reduce the tariff on sugar; they had no inkling it was a political maneuver of a small clique of corrupt beneficiaries and of Ambassador Caffery trying to strengthen his shaky position, shaky indeed if he has to resort to such tactics.

Yesterday I received a letter from a friend in Cuba, smuggled across to Key West: "Every day the signature-takers are out on the streets. They tell people that it is a petition to Roosevelt to reduce the sugar tariff. The sheet does not say precisely what the signature is for. When people refuse to sign, they are met with the plea: 'I don't know exactly what this is for, but look,

* Not to be confused with the National Cuban Federation of Labor (C.N.O.C.) which comprises the majority of the organized workers of Cuba.

I make a penny on each signature, which isn't bad. Give us yours and help me earn this'. I know of persons who have signed up twelve to fifteen times to help these poor folk."

And so history repeats itself. When Marshal Fouche of the French army arrived in Mexico, he created a Council of Notables, many of whom he dug up out of the garbage heap and dressed up to serve on that remarkable body, and with the aid of this farcial organization and his soldiers, collected several hundred thousand signatures to convince the wavering Maximilian that the Mexican people were crying out to have him come and take the oppressor's throne in Mexico. It was an ill-starred adventure.

Caffery's Council of Notables is the Social and Economic Union of Cuba. With its aid and the hirelings of Batista, he has secured a vast array of signatures, by compulsion, by false representation, and other shady maneuvers, to convince the good-hearted monarch of the New Deal that the Cuban people are weaving garlands out of love for him. It is the story of proconsuls everywhere.

Caffery should receive a salary as press-agent for the Batista tyranny. He is more a member of the Cuban government than an ambassador of the American people to the Cuban people. The Cubans call Caffery and Batista "the Siamese twins", but they hate Caffery even more than Batista, for they know Batista could not rule without Caffery. Caffery, and hence the American Embassy, runs what amounts to a propaganda bureau for the Cuban government. Its purpose is to suppress all news unfavorable to the government, to twist and misinterpret as favorably as possible all news in behalf of the Batista government. He has brought frequent pressure on American correspondents in Cuba to this end. He has threatened them with active censorship. Pressure has been brought on editors in the United States. Caffery has boasted of having settled Cabinet crises for the new government which he and Welles helped set up after driving out the Grau San Martin government. It was he who forced out Minister of Labor Juan Antiga after the latter had made a favorable settlement in the telephone strike. Such incidents could be endlessly multiplied. Caffery gives his opinion constantly to the press of Havana and the United States. He tells the Cubans regarding the proper administration of their affairs; he tells

them they are going to have a nice election in December (Batista is more pessimistic on this point), though the Cubans know that with all their leaders dead, in jail or in exile, such an election can only be a bayonet election. Day in and day out Caffery gives optimistic, twisted reports about the improvement of economic conditions on the island. Such doctored statements have the political effect of giving moral aid to the present dictatorship and sanctifying all its crimes. Each statement is a thrust in the back of thousands of political prisoners held in medieval fortress prisons, it is a desecration of the blood of Cuba's martyrs, and is an affront to the thousands of Cubans, many of them her outstanding leaders in thought, literature and science, who have had to flee from the island for their lives. It is the same egregious error made by Ambassador Guggenheim and Hoover in their futile effort to buttress up the Machado tyranny when all its moral roots had been cut. It couldn't be done then and it won't be done now, except at the cost of still greater blood purges.

And Roosevelt receives the blood book and says to the Cuban (the gang's all here) delegation: "Wages are better and you have a better purchasing power."

Fifty per cent of the Cubans are unemployed. I have before me the wage schedule of one of the most important American sugar companies which operates in Oriente. For ordinary workers they pay at present 25 cents a day, for two months work a year. But the man who condemned a large share of our citizens to the munificent wage of $19 a month, lower than that of a Central American banana peon, undoubtedly thinks 25 cents a day is a handsome wage for mere Cubans.

The same day his optimistic statement was published, the press reported a letter smuggled out from the Isle of Pines penitentiary, crowded with honorable political prisoners: "Our lives are in danger and we are constantly beaten up and receive food of the poorest quality."

Even with the Cuban army costing fourteen times what is used to promote agriculture and seven times what is spent on public works, the Caffery-Batista tyranny will not be able to keep down the lid until Roosevelt is safely re-elected. Nor will Mr. Caffery's efforts, blood books, or fine speeches from the President conceal the truth.

Machine Gun Reception

By CLIFFORD ODETS

NIGHT. We walk, stumble up a steep hill. Inky blackness of the night surrounds us. Huge red flowers burn against the reddish bank. The ghostly yellow of bananas. A warm, sweet air. The night is still. Only the clump of feet breaks the stillness, and, in the distance, the faint chugging of an automobile laboring over the rutty dirt road. A night of peace in a tropic, foreign land.

"Alto!" We halt, raggedly. The blue-uniformed, heavily-armed guard at my side lights a cigarette. The match flares, and then flies through the darkness like a falling star. The lagging group catches up with us. We start off again.

"Alto!" Wearily we stop. Sharp words arise in the lagging group. The automobile, loaded with soldiers and police with submachine guns, pulls up. There is much official barking in the quiet night. A brown-shirted soldier, proudly flaunting the fasces on his shoulder-straps, gets out of the automobile, and a heavy-set man gets in with difficulty. Shaffer's wooden leg couldn't stand the grind. Off they go, and then we. The girls' high heels make them stumble.

We don't know where we are being taken. We are members of the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba. We have come here as representatives of many American organizations to investigate the situation of the Cuban people under the military dictatorship and to bring greetings to the Cuban people, to tell them the American people are their friends and will help them.

When our ship docked we were seized, menaced, insulted, some of us mishandled, and now here we are—marching, marching interminably it seems, over cobbled streets, dirt streets, and now this long, winding rutty road. More than thirty police with a batch of assorted officials surround us, watch us suspiciously, ostentatiously handle their arms. We don't like the looks

of the sub-machine guns, nor of their carriers, the young chaps dressed as workers (secret service agents we later discover) whose fingers so fondly caress the barrels. They are itching to show us how efficient those guns, products of American "culture", are, that's evident.

We're dreadfully tired, but we keep alert. We watch every motion of our guards, listen to every word, pass on our observations to one another in low voices (many of the guards understand English). Every sense is strained to catch even the least hint of why we were seized, where we are being taken, what will be our fate, when we will be released . . . A thousand questions pound through our heads.

As the ship we were on came up the bay, with all lights burning to present a proud sight in the dusk, myriads of tiny golden lights gleamed on the shore to the left. To the right was the neon of stores and the rows of lights on the Prado—Havana. Not very far beyond Morro Castle, that grim projection of the past into the present, a living memorial to the grim feudal terror kept alive in Cuba by the military dictatorship, we had seen a gay sight—a little landing wharf, with many brightly lit refreshment stands near it, tall whispering palms, a laughing crowd, and little boats swarming near the wharf like so many magically transformed waterbugs, each glowing with one lantern. Then the little city, shining white in the night. We had asked each other: what place is that?

We knew now, five hours later. We had just marched through it. The motor launch into which we had been piled from the liner *Oriente* by the police had landed us at the very same wharf. At the very sight of the police launch all the little waterbugs had scuttled away. When we were landed on the wharf, the small group that remained of the crowd we had seen earlier immediately quieted down, shrank into the refreshment booths. In the stillness the only noise was the official barks of the bloodhounds of Batista as they gave their orders and the *"Uno, dos, tres, cuatro . . . quince"*—the counting off of the dangerous American "criminals"—we experienced at least a thousand times. As we were marched off through the only street of the small town we realized why the people shrank back into the refreshment booths.

As we tramped past the blank houses, with weathered walls,

shutters awry, heavy bars, battered doors—houses like those in company towns in the United States—if a curious head dared so much as to peer at the makers of the midnight noise, the guards shouted, and the head disappeared pronto. A few children, like their colleagues on New York's East Side, preferring the late night coolness to the stifling heat of overcrowded rooms, were still on the streets. They were swept out of the way by the curses and gun waving of the guards. The few people we saw said nothing while we passed.

This was the town of Casablanca—"Whitehouse"—lying across the bay from lordly Havana with the dome of its $20,000,000 Capitol sticking into the black night like the ghost of a baker's misplaced masterpiece.

Now a few lights, many concrete steps, a huge iron gate, and a sign. "Tiscornia Concentration Camp", we are told. We march to a stately building, into a large room. Shaffer is here already. The guards bar the doors. We wipe our faces and look at one another. The officials go into a huddle. One of the sub-machine gunners (we hear later that he is one of the best shots) sits in a corner fondling his weapon. On the left side of his jacket, like those worn by drivers of department store delivery trucks, is embroidered in red, "A. O.". We ask for water. After a while we get an improvised cornucopiaful. It's tepid. Our names are read from a list. We answer. They are inscribed in a book. We are told to march. We still don't know where or why.

We go down some steps into a road bordered with low squat buildings with heavily barred windows. Peremptory commands are given: "The women together", "Men together by two's", "Women this way", "Men stand still". The women are marched off to the building on the right. We stand. One khaki-clad soldier marches up and down jostling us. Then he stops in front of Frank Griffen, Negro. He curses most foully, he insults, he menaces. Frank pays no attention to his provocations. A word from us, resentment, anger would be the brownshirt's excuse for attack, the attack he desires. The girls wave to us from behind the bars of their jail. The guards stand around talking coarsely and insultingly.

Then we are marched off, to the left. Up the stairs, past a heavy door, past an iron grill, up more stairs, into a long and

narrow room. Evidently we are to sleep here. Along either side are—well, call them— beds. Four high iron posts with a pair of springs near the top and another pair near the bottom make two bunks. On the springs are two rags and an excuse for a pillow. The room holds about 100 such contraptions—sleeping "accommodations" for 200 persons. Each building has two floors. That makes 400 to a building. There are about eight buildings in the camp. Altogether there is room for 1,600 persons, with room to spare for more bunks. Cuba doesn't seem to like visitors, if such a small island provides room for 1,600 "undesirables" at its Ellis Island.

We still don't feel safe. Those guards are still around. We ask about the toilet. It's at the end of the hall, the guards accompany us. They count us over and over again.

We look at each other and smile. There's Reissig, he's a minister, pastor of the Congregational Church. He's never been in jail; he sits on his spring, testing it. He doesn't quite know what to do about it. There's Crosbie, been in the Army, represents the League of American Ex-Servicemen, he's had worse to sleep on than a spring. Shaffer is already taking his coat off. Komorowski's looking at the bird that just flew in the window after a moth and is now madly circling around the big light. Odets is lighting a cigarette and examining the room. As he said later, the room was perfect for representation on the stage. Griffen, International Labor Defense representative on the Commission, is carrying out his part of the job we came to Cuba to do. He is on the Sub-Commission on Civil Liberties and Prisons and he has been offered by the Cuban government the opportunity of seeing one from the inside. Johnson, representing the Food Workers' Industrial Union, member of the Sub-Commission on the Condition of Negroes in Cuba, has been also given first-hand information by the Cuban government of its feeling toward Negroes. Johnson has already been picked out by the guard for special attention because he is a Negro. Santiago, Irving, Gordon are deep in conversation.

But behind our calmness and matter of fact attitude, each of us is preoccupied. There is nothing we want to do so much as to carry out our investigation in Cuba, to mingle with the Cuban people, to see how they work and live, to establish friendly relations with them, to make them feel the physical force of the

friendship we had brought from the people of the United States by going to their homes, the factories, the fields . . .

We have been eating, living, and sleeping Cuba. Our organizations have made real sacrifices to get us here. The cause of the Cuban people has become an ardent fire in us.

We talk a little about this, disjointedly. The guards have gone. But in a few minutes a squad of Marines marches in. They are shown the entrance and exit, the places in which we are to sleep. We are now lying on the springs. We lie a few minutes, and then turn over. It's just as bad. We turn again. Just as bad. One of the employees sleeps in the same room, but he has a mattress. He has fine mosquito netting. We watch him. He puts a taper inside the netting and lets it do its work before he crawls in. We have nothing.

On the last day out we sent several members of the Commission to the ship's doctor for advice. They brought back quinine tablets, for preventative use against malaria, chlorine tablets to disinfect water and glasses, and lots of advice. Our medicine is still in our baggage, and we don't know where that is now.

The lights are still burning. We talk a little. The Marine in charge says: "Silencio, shshshshsh. . . ." We try to sleep. We move spasmodically on the springs. Are our friends worried? Our fathers, mothers, wives? When we move the guards are on the alert. They've been told we are dangerous. We try to sleep. A mosquito on some one's back. Quick! Slap! Night mosquitos bear malaria. We watch the birds, the moths, hear the drone of a mosquito. We try to sleep.

* * *

Dawn is not beautiful seen from behind prison bars. Officially we were to rise at 6:30 a.m., but, as far as we were concerned, it was merely a point of reference. Before 6:30 we were awake, but officially asleep, after 6:30 we were officially awake. Breakfast was brought to us. There was a small tub full of half-cartwheels of bread, a bucket full of some darkish liquid, and ten metal mugs. We tried the bread and liquid, but the bread contained some twigs and leaves and was dry, while the liquid was not potable.

We spoke to the Marines, told them how hungry we were,

asked them if we could possibly get something to eat. They held a conference, and at last one of them went out. While he was gone, a young boy came in. He came to look at us, but we immediately tackled him. He said he could bring us only beer. That was all the Camp canteen had. So, beer it was, half an hour later. The Marine came back with a tin full of mangoes picked off the ground. But the ship's doctor had warned us that the June mango is poisonous, so they went begging. Then we managed to get some cigarettes through the boy, and after much excited talk and argument, a few newspapers.

There we were—spread over the front page. And there too, at the end, was the news that there had been a Cuban Welcoming Committee, that it had waited patiently from early morning until late at night (the ship was 12-14 hours late), and that it had been savagely attacked by police. Many had been badly beaten, and twenty had been arrested. Part of the Committee, which had been composed of artists, writers, students, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and workers, had gone to one of the Havana newspapers to protest the brutal treatment of the Welcoming Committee and our arrest. They also landed in jail.

The military dictatorship thought that by crushing the reception and arresting us it would be able to put an end to the friendship between the Cuban and American people. But it only bound us more straitly together. Our hearts thrilled when we read of the heroic Welcoming Committee. What had been words before—solidarity, support—became an actual living force. We in our jail, they in theirs, were more closely and personally bound than ever before. Our brotherhood was strengthened.

The flood of protests was so large the papers had to acknowledge it. All Cuba knew we had come, and why we had come. And all Cuba approved. The action of the military dictatorship against us only exposed its oppressive character. It was a boomerang.

The Marines were kind, but firm with us. They chatted, but they had orders we were not to leave the room. They went with us to the toilet, and incessantly mumbled: *"Uno, dos, tres, cuarto . . . diez"*—counting us off.

One of the Marines had been four years in the service. We

asked how old he was. He answered: "Eighteen". Why were they Marines? "Nothing else do to—no jobs, nothing."

The label on the shirt of one of the Marines was loose and hung outside. It read: "Yankee Brand". The uniforms, the rifles, the ammunition—Yankee. Last night's automobile—Yankee. The launch—Yankee. The Havana Capitol, fine buildings, and "public works"—built from Yankee loans. The street cars, electric lights, telephone, gas—Yankee. One railroad—Yankee; the other—British.

We had already learned, coming down on the boat as we prepared ourselves for our work of investigation, that 70 per cent of the sugar cane was ground in Yankee mills. That almost all banking, and hence loans, mortgages, advances, financing, is in Yankee hands. The majority and most efficient of the sugar mills are—Yankee. The best sugar lands lie in—Yankee hands.

It is no wonder the Cubans have a saying: "All the Cuban owns is his flag and national anthem". And at that, the flag is made in a Yankee mill, hoisted on Yankee rope to the top of a Yankee mast while the national anthem is played on Yankee instruments.

Yankee finance is so solicitous about Cuban welfare it even manufactures Cuban "revolutions" in its own offices, gets Yankee police authorities to train the Cuban police to break strikes, to throw tear gas bombs, and in other ways "preserve peace and order".

A few hours passed. At 11 we had some news: we were to be photographed at 11:30. Who was going to photograph us? The Marine who had brought the news was not quite sure. He ran downstairs and over to the main building. It was one of the newspapers, he reported back to us. Then we heard: No, it is the police. Well, if the police wanted to photograph us, it would take a lot of coaxing. We were not criminals. The order came: Downstairs for the picture. We lagged. The Marines insisted: they had their orders. So we went, slowly, lagging. Odets was delegated to discover who wanted our picture, and to protest police pictures. He reported: It's a newspaper. So we went.

The girls were already there. There was a hubbub of talk. How had matters gone with them? With us? We counted off, parodying the mother-hen fussing of the Cuban officials over their criminal brood. Dora Zucker, Rank and File Needle

Trades, here; Celeste Strack, National Student League, here; Lucille Pettyjohn, Provisional Committee for Cuba, here; Elsa Waldman, National Student League, here; Mary Gruber, American League Against War and Fascism, here. All here and in good shape except for countless mosquito bites and a sleepless night.

Then the pictures. Meanwhile, Odets and Crosbie, delegated for this job, had been negotiating for permission for a telephone call to the American consul. Permission finally came.

The American consulate was surprised to hear we were in Cuba, and politely astonished that we had spent the night at Tiscornia. One of the men would be out later in the day.

It was beautiful weather. The curiously reddish-brown soil, the green grass, the palms, the brilliant flowers, shining buildings . . . and the unemployed sitting on benches, idle hands between their knees.

Back to the long room, our respite ended. Our friends from the canteen brought us green cocoanuts. We all chipped in together, things came high in that jail. The cocoanuts helped quench our thirst. There was no water, and the beer was tepid and heavy in our empty stomachs.

Some friendly reporters came. We went out to be interviewed. Three of us quickly wrote another statement of our arrest. This was our only contact with the world, our only chance to let our friends know what had happened to us. Time and time again we asked permission to send wires, cables, to telephone. Nothing doing. There were some incoming calls. A cable asked Odets to write a story for the *New York Evening Post*. It was shown to the official in charge. Can't send from here, was all he offered. And then, our second big thrill of the day—a long-distance call from New York. The Group Theatre and the American League Against War and Fascism spoke to us, told us of the meeting being arranged, of the protests, of the anger at the actions of the military dictatorship. We laughed, we jumped. It was worth everything that had happened to us.

Later the American Vice-Consul, Edgar, came. The newspapermen introduced Odets to him, but he couldn't have shaken hands more gingerly if Odets had been a leper. He had nothing to say. The first thing in the morning a member of the consulate

staff had gone to the Immigration authorities (here he contradicted the telephone conversation). They were determined to send us back, but Edgar did not know how or when. We had been denounced under the double charge of being desirable neither as aliens nor as tourists. He couldn't say what was going to be done about us. "Apparently the Cuban government doesn't want you", he said. We asked: "Why?" "You know why," was his answer.

Mr. Edgar is apparently not a first-rate diplomat, or he would not have exposed the attitude of the American Consulate so clearly. That "you know why" showed that the American officials had made no attempt to present our case, that they concurred willingly in the totally unsubstantiated attitude of the Cuban authorities who had said that we, fifteen of us, had come to upset the government.

Mr. Edgar was impatient. He asked no questions, made no inquiries, asked no explanations, ascertained no facts—except about our baggage.

Somehow the rest of the afternoon passed. There were all kinds of rumors, but no statement. Late in the afternoon Mr. Edgar telephoned that we were to be put back on the *Oriente*. He gave us to understand there was nothing to be done about it. We were being handled under Cuban immigration law, and the United States officials would in no way meddle in the sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba.

About 6 we were told to march to the mess hall for supper. Some of us said we were not hungry, didn't want to eat. But we all had to go. We ate bean soup, rice, and meat, under guard, and then waited in the mess hall while it rained outside. Finally we got to a pavilion and waited for transportation. The girls went first, with Marines standing on the running board. We went next. The town gaped at us. While we stood waiting for the launch, although the little wharf was crowded, no one spoke to us. Here we had a chance to buy some papers. Our pictures were in one paper, and stories about us in all. We were criminals, subversive elements, undesirables. Our case had been taken to the President himself. The books seized in our baggage had been examined by him. The papers said we had brought "communistic literature" with us.

If the President was right, then he himself had sponsored

"communistic literature". For one of the books seized was *Problems of the New Cuba,* written by a group of experts who had been invited to Cuba by President Mendieta. The book is published by the Foreign Policy Association on a Rockefeller grant. The other books were such outrageously subversive ones as *The Crime of Cuba,* by Carleton Beals, and *Our Cuban Colony,* by Professor Leland Jenks. (This latter, by the way, had been borrowed from a church library!) And that is all there had been except for a set of dispatches Carleton Beals had sent from Havana for NANA News Service.

The launch took us back to the *Oriente,* by the back door. We were taken to the unused side of the wharf, unloaded, counted off, lined up in twos, and marched up the stairs and the gangplank into the lobby of the *Oriente* under guard. There we were checked off against our landing cards, counted again, and marched into the library. There the consul was waiting for us. He mumbled nothings for fifteeen or twenty minutes and departed. Mr. Edgar's contribution was the checking of our baggage to see that all pieces were returned to us. He said he could do nothing about the confiscated books. We were entered on the ship's register and "deported" was written neatly behind each name. Our guards still stuck to us.

Just before the ship was to sail, the secret service men guarding the doors left—but they didn't go far. We went out to the ship's rail, and there, watching the entrance to the pier, even though the gangplank had been lifted, stood our guards. Faithful to death, they guarded those entrances until the ship had actually drawn away from the wharf.

While they were there, they kept busy. A man on the pier shouted some joking remarks to us—how had we liked the Cuban climate? How were the beds at Tiscornia? Did we enjoy the food? And the company? The secret service men had a notebook in which they entered all his remarks. As the ship pulled out we noticed that the secret service men had gathered in a close bunch behind him so that he was sure to face them when he turned around to go away, and that the lover of the submachine gun, the one with "A. O." over his heart in red, had joined them.

* * *

The ship sailed out. All lights were on, as they had been on the way in—only the night before, but it already seemed like days before. On the left side was Havana, the strings of lights, the neon signs, and the grotesque Capitol dome. In the parks the unemployed slept on the benches. To one side was Vedado, the rich suburb. On the outskirts, the city of dumps, houses made of oilcans and planks, of poverty and pestilence. Here a great new pier is going up, and in the sugar fields, the land lies fallow, the sugar mills grind 38 days out of the year, weeds conquer the wearisome work of months, the unemployed, the dispossessed, the starving flow into the cities to swell the flood of jobless. More and more falls into the maw of Yankee finance.

On the right, Casablanca, and then Morro Castle, and Cuba lay behind us as we had seen it coming in. It lies long, and low, with warm hills melting into one another. It shines green, white towns stare out.

The evening star appeared, making a path on the water like a miniature moon. The engines throbbed. We stood and watched Cuba fall back. It grew softer, dimmer, but it did not fade from our hearts. An evening mist came up.

Later, we all met in the smoking room. We had not eaten, and this was the place for sandwiches. First three of us sat down, and then one by one, we had all gathered.

We had all sat here before, but under vastly different circumstances. The night before we had docked in Havana. We were all on the deck lined up to have our landing cards stamped by the Immigration authorities. The steward told us the press wanted to see us in the smoking room. We all went in together. Some men were standing on the inside of the door in the hall leading to the smoking room, but we thought nothing of this. We walked in. More men by each door. And a little squad of linen-suited, hard-faced men to greet us: "Right over this way". The blue-uniformed Maritime Police surrounded us. We were herded to the other side of the room. The two doors there had already been locked and police stood near them. Photographers tried to take pictures, but they were chased. The press asked for Clifford Odets, chairman of the Commission. Three of us went to one of the tables with them. The police were busy with the others and didn't notice. When another member of the Executive Committee tried to join us she was roughly pushed back.

Odets distributed the press statements we had prepared announcing our plans, the names and organizations of the delegates, and our greeting to the Cuban people. The press men immediately hid them. The representatives of the Havana papers came, sat down gingerly on the edge of a chair, asked for a statement and immediately beat it. The only ones to stay there were the representatives of American papers and news services. Manning Johnson, secretary of the Commission, a Negro, was sitting with us. A secret service man saw him, rushed off, jerked him out of his seat, swore at him, and roughly pushed him across the room. Members of the Commission protested.

The officials took the name and address of every member of the Commission, saying: "Your *real* name". They checked this against *a list they already had.* Time and time again we demanded the name, position and authority of the linen-suited man obviously in charge. He laughed and refused to answer except for: "Lieutenant of Police". We asked the press men, but they volunteered no information. Our landing cards were seized.

There had evidently been spies on board, and the police had received full information concerning each one of us, including descriptions of our appearance. The surveillance had even extended to persons we had met on shipboard. A New York reporter, one of the cruise passengers, who had known Odets in New York, and had sat up once or twice talking to him, was held, not allowed to leave the room, refused permission to land that night, and followed the next day when he went into Havana. A Cuban we had met on the boat, who had followed us into the room because he had promised to show us a good hotel, was seized. As soon as the officials discovered he was a Cuban they searched him and then took him to jail. Two schoolteachers who were on their way to Mexico, who had become friendly with us, were also seized, and held with us. They were sent to Tiscornia.

After a bit the newspapermen were told to get going. Some cable boys came into the room. We immediately wrote cables to President Mendieta and Ambassador Caffery, as well as to friends and organizations in the United States. We paid for these cables. But when the boy left the room, a secret service

man went with him and, as we later found out, evidently confiscated the cables, for not one was ever received. The purser and assistant purser came into the room, but they gave us no information, conferred with the officials, and left the room. We demanded use of the telephone which we were told had been connected with shore. We were refused. We sat there under heavy armed guard from 8 until 11. In the meantime excited palavers went on among the officials. Later we found out that the arguments had been concerning jurisdiction: both the Immigration authorities and the National Police disputing the glory of taking care of us. Spies, dressed in such clothes as dock workers wear, came in and scrutinized us attentively, made sneering remarks.

We had done all we could do. We did not care to be subject to the brutality already shown to us. We got the Executive Committee together and began discussing what should be our next course of action. We decided that, if we had the chance, we would stay on the boat. That would mean a chance to talk to passengers, perhaps, to get a message ashore, to do something about our arrest. If we were taken to jail, it would certainly mean isolation similar to that we were experiencing.

Just as we had come to this decision, the police stood up, the boss-official came back, and we were told to line up. Resistance meant mistreatment. The police had already shown brazen effrontery, had mishandled members of the commission. They were itching to show their unqualified power over us.

And, because they had gone so far, we suspected why they were so brave. The tourist trade in Havana is a big financial item. A specially trained corps of police has been organized to help tourists. They are polite, obsequious. Obviously we were not being handled by them. Our money-value as tourists was being foregone, let alone the bad effect news of our mistreatment would have on other tourist money. Evidently strong enough forces were acting to overcome this obstacle.

We also knew that Cuba is the country where the officers of the Machado regime had taken refuge in the National Hotel over which the flag of the United States flew because Mr. Sumner Welles was making his headquarters there. Cuba is the country in which one of the most hated men, General Herrera, a man who had brought sorrow and suffering into hundreds of

thousands of homes because of his actions as Machado's chief butcher, had been able to reach a ship safely. He had been able to escape because it was Mr. Sumner Welles in person who had escorted General Herrera in an armored car flying the flag of the United States to one of the Panama-American Line ships.

It was in Cuba also that the Mendieta-Batista military dictatorship had proceeded to solve the country's problems and to re-establish "peace and order" by sending strikebreakers into the plants of the Cuban Electric Company, American-owned. The police and army had been used as a weapon for the solution, not of Cuba's problems, but of the problems of Yankee finance and industry. Even though this included the shooting down of protesting or striking workers, the breaking up—even if at the cost of life—of demonstrations, the protection of strike-breakers, acting as strike-breakers, refined tortures in the jails, firing squads for civilians, the military dictatorship rushed on. A strike of the railroad workers? Soldiers man the trains. Strikes in the sugar fields? Soldiers kill strikers, force others to work at the points of guns. The workers refuse to accept the government-manufactured settlement of the electric workers' strike? The soldiers force a staff of workers to maintain service, and attack the other strikers. The students demonstrate against Mendieta, Batista, and United States Ambassador Caffery? The soldiers fire on them.

Always that same concern for Yankee enterprises, Yankee *opinion*. The reason given for sending soldiers to the sugar fields was that it was necessary for the sugar mills to grind. Time and time again Mendieta has threatened that the United States government will intervene unless the workers give in. The *New York Times* reported, in a dispatch dated February 2, 1934: "It is understood that President Mendieta appealed for the closest cooperation of the workers on the basis of patriotism, and warned them that if strikes and disorders continued over the island United States intervention would be provoked."

Of course, President Mendieta may have been gravely joking in a paternal manner. But Mr. Freeman Matthews, first secretary and charge d'affaires of the United States Embassy was present at the time this warning was uttered.

President Mendieta stated, at another time, "The future of Cuba lies in her going hand in hand with the United States

. . . " What he meant is clear. Our arrest was brought to his personal attention, but we were deported. On the other hand, he listens to Mr. Caffery. Witness:

"State Department officials said tonight that Mr. Caffery was instructed to act in the case of the Cuban-American Sugar Company factory, alleged to have been taken over for operation by the Cuban government" (but actually by the Cuban workers).

That was on January 7, and the Caffery statement was sent to President Grau.

Then, "United States Consul General Dumont asked Colonel Batista, Chief of Staff, for adequate protection for the company's properties. Guards were immediately doubled around the various plants". But this was not enough; on the 15th we find that "Colonel Fulgencio Batista, chief of staff, was notified last night of the concern of the United States Embassy over the strike. Jefferson Caffery, personal representative of President Roosevelt, conferred with Colonel Batista late last night."

Batista carried out instructions. "It is understood that Colonel Batista ordered the heavy guard of soldiers on duty at all plants of the Compania Cubana de Electricidad, now under government operation since their seizure on January 14, to prevent employees leaving the plants before relief crews arrive."

On receiving reports that the Mendieta regime would return the properties (where the workers had made a saving of $420,000 a year by firing excess technicians) there was a strike. It was of short duration, however. "By 12:45 service has been resumed, with army engineers directing strike-breakers" (January 18).

As a result of these, and other strike-breaking activities of the Mendieta-Batista military dictatorship, Ambassador Caffery "is much encouraged with conditions existing in Cuba and believes that President Carlos Mendieta will shortly have the island back to normal". This was on January 19. He also stated: "It is not in my power to recommend recognition and therefore I cannot comment on this [recognition]. I will say, however, that I believe that under Mendieta conditions in Cuba are going to shape up better and that I am already encouraged by steps taken by the new administration." At this time the Mendieta regime was busy breaking the electric, railway, medical and other workers' strikes and the public employees and students'

strikes. Plans were under way to release the wholeheartedly hated Machado officers. By January 22 only eight sugar mills were operating. "The American mills are hesitant to start on the crop, as they are awaiting action by the new government giving them sufficient protection against disgruntled workers." The action was in force, but it was not sufficient. "Workers at a sugar mill at Mercedes, Matanzas Province, went on strike today in protest against the arrest by the army of several Communist leaders who were agitating in that district."

With so ardent a desire to do only those things liked by Mr. Caffery and holders of Yankee capital invested in Cuba, it is strange that we were so viciously treated.

It was well known that our Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions was coming to Cuba. Newspaper reports stated that two Federal men had come down on the same ship with us. Our arrival had been well publicized in Havana. In the *Avance* of July 2, for all to read, is the following news: "Members of the Secret Service were on board the *Pennsylvania* in connection with the arrival of a group of Left writers who are announced as arriving today in Havana and who are coming on the ship *Oriente!*" Further along we find: "PRECAUTIONS TAKEN. The necessary precautions have been taken by Senor Oscar Hernandez, Captain of the Maritime Police, in connection with the arrival of a group of Left North Americans headed by the writer Clifford Odette and which includes Maurice Halperin, Paul Crosbie, Frank Gruffan, John Frankfz, Mannin Johnson and Conrad Komorowsky, all of whom arrive tonight on the ship *Oriente,* with the purpose of realizing determined investigations on social affairs.

"No demonstrations will be permitted that have not been duly authorized by the *superioridad.*" This was headlined. [The spelling of names is *Avance's.*]

An interesting piece of news is that the *Military Attache* of the Embassy visited the head of the Customs this very same day. The Military Attache is reported to have felicitated Doctor Belt on the high collection of customs during the last fiscal year and to have inquired about a vinegar import a North American merchant wants to make.

On the trip back a delegation from the Commission visited Captain Seastrom of the *Oriente.* He said that the Commercial

Attache of the Embassy, Mr. Donnelly, had been on the pier while we were arrested.

Perhaps our treatment was not so strange. We know that the National Police participated in our arrest. We know that a quarrel arose as to jurisdiction. We know that we were to be taken to La Punta, and the police had already promised us beatings. Suddenly—

Yes, we suspected why the Cuban authorities had dared go so far in their treatment of fifteen American citizens. So we lined up. We were marched out through the lobby onto the gangplank. We were counted off incessantly. We were marched, two by two, into the customs room and told to sit down on the long low table on which baggage is placed. The police lined up in front of us two and three deep with a thick cluster at one end and several marching up and down. It had every appearance of a concerted charge upon us with clubs and revolvers and gun butts—the same fate that had befallen the Cuban Welcoming Committee. The insolent attitude of the police, their provocative gestures, words, and attitude contributed to this appearance. The young provocateurs, spies in workers' clothes, marched up and down egging on the Maritime Police.

This was the most trying time. There had been restraint in the smoking salon, compared to this. There were so many police here it was difficult to see what was happening clearly. The members of the Commission were called up one at a time. When the first two went we did not know what was happening. In Cuba, where the police and army has had the most brutal and undisputed sway, anything may be expected, as in Hitler Germany. These were the very same men who had "questioned" workers so efficiently no "coaxing" could extract another word from them, so badly or mortally beaten had they been. These were the murderers of strikers, students, peasants.

We believed we were to be "questioned" too. We waited for our turn. While this was going on we heard a commotion. A wire or cable of some sort had arrived. Naturally we could not know what it was. But one word was repeated over and over again as the paper was handed around to the many officials to read. That word was "Caffery".

Had the United States Embassy come to the assistance of fifteen American citizens?

But the same procedure continued. We were marched up, told to pick out our baggage, to open it. Some baggage-linings were torn. Some of us were searched, some several times. Books and papers were confiscated. "Communistic propaganda." The secret service man who took these was congratulated all around. These told the truth about Cuba! This was evidence of a Communist plot!

While the baggage was being ripped open, those who had been searched were marched to another side of the room. The brown shirts and spies marched up and down trying to prove that some of us were not American citizens. This one has longish hair—he's Russian. This one's father was born in Poland . . .

Then, we were stood up, counted off, and marched out and down a long flight of stairs. Guards watched every entrance and exit. We were taken a little way and told to get into a launch. The men went forward, the women aft. Spies with machine guns got in to watch us. They pointed the guns at us, patted them, told us in Spanish how wonderful they were, how well they could shoot.

* * *

The bay, Havana at night, the little wharf—

Up the dark streets, up the long hill. In Cuba there is a game the police and army play, "Ley de Fuga". Machado used it frequently. Mendieta outlawed it. But there are dozens who have been its victims within the last year.

The police shoot you in the back, and claim you were "trying to escape". That was what we expected as we went up the hill.

We racked our brains to think of what jail we were going to. We didn't know until we saw the sign on the gate—Tiscornia. So it was not La Cabana, or La Punta. Somehow that paper and the word "Caffery" popped into our heads. Not La Punta, the army jail, with promised beatings, that would have created a terrific scandal at home. But Tiscornia, the Ellis Island of Cuba (with the added trimmings of the military dictatorship). That's not so serious for the authorities at home. Remember John Strachey. Tiscornia is easier to explain than La Punta, and just as good for ending the investigation. Tiscornia it shall be.

We have a letter from the State Department. It says we

were not arrested, and we were not deported. In other words, we just didn't exist, we disappeared like smoke, from the time the ship docked until it sailed, when we materialized out of the void. Yes, Tiscornia provided an explanation La Punta would never have been able to provide.

But it really hid nothing. The reception for us when we got home, the thousands of protests made, the indignation and anger of the American people placed the blame precisely where it belonged—at United States control of Cuba, the open and cloaked intervention in Cuban affairs.

Report of the American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba

THE American Commission to Investigate Labor and Social Conditions in Cuba was organized as a result of reports in the press of the United States of abrogation of all democratic rights, forcible suppression of trade unions, merciless slaughter and imprisonment of participants in the general strike of March by the blood-hungry Batista-Mendieta military dictatorship. It was organized because it had become a notorious fact, one evident to all who do not accommodatingly shut their eyes, that United States imperialism controls Cuba and is directly involved in the regime of misery and blood in Cuba.

In sending the Commission to Cuba our organizations charged us with the fulfilment of certain tasks: to bring back information about present conditions in Cuba, as a report to the people of the United States to be the basis for the organization of a national campaign of solidarity, and to deliver warmest greetings of friendship to the Cuban people to hearten them in their struggle for a genuinely independent Cuba.

Clifford Odets, Chairman of the Commission, has written

the story of what happened to the Commission in Cuba. Here we want to present only our conclusions.

The treatment of the Commission, censorship of messages, and the attack and jailing of the Cuban Reception Committee brands the Batista-Mendieta military dictatorship before the world as a regime based solely upon force and terror, afraid of investigation because of the horrible crimes it has committed against the Cuban people.

By deporting an anti-imperialist Commission which bore only the friendliest of feeling for all Cubans genuinely struggling for independence, the Batista-Mendieta regime brazenly exhibited to the world its betrayal of the national aspirations of the Cuban people, total disregard of the true interests of the Cuban people, and support of imperialism. The military dictatorship "defends" the Cuban people from their real friends, the American people, and subjects them to the depredations of their real enemies—the American imperialist owners of the sugar lands, mills, utilities.

We charge that the clique ruling Cuba is the puppet of American imperialism—in the case of the deportation of the Commission as well as in every other case.

The American officials in Cuba demonstrated by their actions the most complete collusion with the Cuban military dictatorship. No exposure of the miserable condition of servitude forced upon the Cuban people by American imperialism is wanted. Only the obsequious crawling and lying of initiators of "blood books" are favored. The American people is given a diet of half-truths and lies—all to protect the one and a half billion dollars of American imperialist investments in Cuba.

The deportation of our Commission was a boomerang. Batista-Mendieta and American imperialism sought to end exposure, but they only made the exposure more complete.

We know, and greater numbers of the American people know, more of the truth about Cuba. And this truth is a shell to be hurled at imperialism, to wipe it out of Cuba to help make possible the successful achievement of the goal toward which the Cuban people have been struggling for years—a completely free and genuinely independent Cuba, of, by, and for Cubans.

The tasks laid upon the Commission have not been ful-

filled. We must organize a national campaign of solidarity with the Cuban people. We, and the organizations we represent, are ardently engaged in fulfilling this task. We ask you to help.

All the American people, as a part of their tradition of genuine democracy, can and will help. Of that we feel sure.

The Provisional Committee For Cuba was organized precisely for the task of unifying the efforts of the American people for assistance in the struggle of the Cuban people for freedom. It is especially vital that the American people help—for the way to freedom is barred primarily by American imperialist domination of Cuba.

We are in this fight. We ask all who read this pamphlet to help the Provisional Committee for Cuba.

AMERICAN COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE LABOR AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN CUBA

Clifford Odets, *Chairman*
Manning Johnson, *Secretary*
Frank L. Gordon
Lucile Pettyjohn
Reverend Herman Reissig
Nathan Shaffer
Dora Zucker
Celeste Strack
Conrad Komorowski
Mary Gruber
Jose Santiago
Elsa Waldman
Frank Griffin
Paul Crosbie
Paul Irving

It Is Time

FOR CUBA TO BE RETURNED TO THE CUBANS, TO BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE ITS OWN DESTINY.

America, too, was once a colony. And we are rightly proud of our war of independence, of our traditions of liberty and freedom. But our government is today, in the interests of a tiny section of the population, making a mockery of those traditions by maintaining Cuba as a colony.

In 1898 our men were sent to face malaria, bullets and tropical heat, to free Cuba from Spain. Is this the freedom they fought for?

The Cuban people are now fighting for their own declaration of independence. It is up to the American people—all who sincerely believe in liberty—to see that the Cuban people get it.

The American Commission, which was expelled from Cuba, represented the good will of thousands of Americans towards the Cuban people. The Committee which organized the Commission, the Provisional Committee for Cuba, is working daily to extend that good will.

But much more must be done. Batista and Mendieta must be flooded with protests from individuals and organizations. Hundreds of thousands of signatures demanding the withdrawal of Caffery must be collected. A conference of organizations must be called to form a permament committee. A campaign for a Congressional investigation of Cuban-United States relations must be prepared for the next session of Congress. There is much to be done, and we ask you to help.

Write to the Provisional Committee for Cuba.

Use the coupon below.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE FOR CUBA,
77 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

I am interested in the Provisional Committee for Cuba. Please send me the following (checked below):

☐ Information ☐ Resolutions ☐ Petitions

☐ My organization wishes to affiliate with the Provisional Committee for Cuba.

Name .....

Address .....

Organization .....